

TARIFF, SLAVERY, MEXICAN WAR, &c.

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF RHODE ISLAND,

RELATIVE TO

The tariff, slavery, Mexican war, &c.

FEBRUARY 10, 1847.

Read, and laid upon the table.

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS.

In General Assembly, January session, A D. 1847.

Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, That the policy of affording adequate protection to the capital and labor employed in the production of domestic manufactures has at all times been asserted by the legislatures of this State, and received the undivided and hearty concurrence of their constituents.

Resolved, That the tariff on imports enacted by Congress, August, 1842, was well conceived and adapted to afford such adequate protection, and at the same time to secure to the people of the United States an ample revenue for all the legitimate purposes of government, without imposing any unequal burden on any class or interest in any portion of the community affected by its provisions.

Resolved, That the repeal of the said tariff, at the late session of Congress, after the fullest experience of its beneficent operation, when the government had involved itself in an unnecessary and most expensive contest with Mexico, was highly inexpedient and unjust, and manifested a disregard for the pressing necessities of the government, and the credit of the country, no less criminal and unwise than the blow intended to be inflicted by it on our most essential interests.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this assembly, the exigencies of the government, in the present unprecedented crisis, as well as the just principles of political economy, require that the tariff of 1842, which was adequately protective in its provisions, and yielded an annual income of twenty-seven millions of dollars, be re enacted by Congress; the tariff of 1846 being, even in the estimation of its friends, insufficient to meet the present and prospective demands on the national treasury.

Richie & Heiss, print.

Resolved, That to revive the exploded system of collecting the United States revenue by means of a sub-treasury, which exacts, for all dues to the government, payment in specie, at a time when the banking institutions of the States are, with scarcely an exception, in a sound condition, is absurd in theory and oppressive in practice, and even if founded in correct principles, is, in the present state of things, manifestly beyond the power of the government to enforce.

Resolved, That, while we yield to no State in the Union in our condemnation of the system of slavery which the errors of past ages have transmitted to us, and will cheerfully co-operate in any just and constitutional measures to terminate it, we are not insensible to the difficulties of the position of our southern brethren, nor disinclined to fulfil in its true spirit every obligation and duty imposed upon us by the terms of our compact, as embodied in the constitution of the United States; but submitting ourselves implicitly to the requirements of that instrument, we insist upon a like compliance by other parties to said compact, with all its material stipulations, express or implied. We protest, therefore, against the acquisition of territory, by conquest or otherwise, beyond the present limits of the United States, for the purpose of establishing therein slaveholding States, as deranging the balance of political power once so happily established between our confederated communities, and as manifestly in violation of the spirit and intent of the constitution. We protest against the introduction of slaves, upon any terms, into any territory of the United States, whether of old or recent acquisition, where slavery does not exist or has not immemorially existed; and we hold, that so far from aiming to extend an institution like slavery over a wider territory than is now pervaded by it, it is clearly the interest, no less than the duty of the slaveholding States, to circumscribe its operation within their own limits, and to provide, if possible, the means of its gradual extinguishment whenever public sentiment will permit it.

Resolved, That while we acknowledge with just pride the gallant conduct of Generals Taylor and Worth, and the forces under their command, in storming the formidable redoubts and fortified streets of Monterey, and hail in the operations of our navy at Tabasco the new glory which illustrates a cherished Rhode Island name, we cannot but lament the waste of treasure and life which has hitherto attended a contest waged to no valuable end, which, with ordinary discretion on the part of our Executive, might have been avoided with honor, and consistently with a firm determination to vindicate, by all constitutional means, our national claims and rights.

Resolved, That, holding these opinions of the origin of our war with Mexico, and deeming a war of conquest inconsistent with the genius of our institutions, and destructive of their freedom and permanency, we instruct our Senators and request our Representatives in Congress to press upon the Executive department, on all proper occasions, the necessity of frank and equitable overtures to that republic for the re-establishment of peace, and to favor in their own bodies all acts and declarations which may promote that end, consistently with a due observance of the rights, claims, and reputation of the United States.

Resolved, That his excellency the governor be, and he is hereby, requested to transmit a copy of these resolutions to each of our Senators

and Representatives in Congress, to be laid before their respective houses ;
and also copies to the executive departments of the several States.

True copy :

HENRY BOWEN,
Secretary of State.

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
January 6, 1847.

SIR : In compliance with a resolution of the General Assembly of this
State, I have the honor to forward to you the accompanying documents.

With much respect, your obedient servant,

BYRON DIMAN.

HON. HENRY Y. CRANSTON,
Representative in Congress, Washington.

and Representatives in Congress, to be laid before their respective houses ;
and also copies to the executive departments of the several States.

HENRY BOWEN

Secretary of State

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

January 6, 1847

With much respect, your obedient servant

BYRON DIMAN

Hon. Gerrit Y. Cass

Representative in Congress